

RECOGNITION OF PUBLIC SERVICE OF DR. THOMAS LARSON

HON. BUD SHUSTER

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 1997

Mr. SHUSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise to thank Dr. Thomas Larson for the vital contributions he has made to our Nation's transportation policy, most recently in the field of rail passenger transportation. Dr. Larson has had a long and distinguished career in transportation policy, including outstanding performance as the Secretary of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and as administrator of the Federal Highway Administration under President Bush. In these earlier positions, Dr. Larson demonstrated broad expertise, an impressive ability to bring together people and organizations with different views, and a tireless dedication to achieving a sound, balanced, and steady national transportation policy.

Earlier this year, knowing of Dr. Larson's outstanding credentials and record, I asked him to be the coordinator who would head the all-volunteer Inter-City Rail Working Group established by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to recommend policies to address the current critical situation and near-bankruptcy of Amtrak.

As he always does, Tom approached this task with boundless zeal and determination. Like the other working group members, Tom served without any compensation and traveled to all working group meetings at his own expense. He met with the other 12 members of the working group, who represented both political parties and a wide range of transportation expertise—finance, rail operations, passenger service, labor relations, and more. Getting these people from various parts of the country together for discussions and deliberations was no easy task in itself. But Tom also managed to guide the discussions so effectively that the working group was able to coalesce around a single package of policy recommendations on an 11 to 2 vote. I consider this an outstanding accomplishment, but for Tom Larson, it is par for the course.

Tom has continued to assist the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as we work to forge new legislation not only to reform inter-city rail passenger service, but also to fashion the bill that will reauthorize the many surface transportation programs under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act [ISTEA]. His counsel has been especially valuable, since Tom was the Federal Highway Administrator at the time Congress wrote the book in the original 1991 ISTEA legislation.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to convey my heartfelt thanks and those of my colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to Dr. Tom Larson for his wise and valuable counsel and assistance. We do not yet know whether inter-city rail passenger service can be successfully reformed without the chaos of an Amtrak bankruptcy, but Tom and his colleagues have given us a much better framework for approaching this task as a result of their selfless public service. I can think of no better model or epitome of true public service than the career of Dr. Tom Larson.

CALLING FOR UNITED STATES INITIATIVE SEEKING JUST AND PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF SITUATION ON CYPRUS

SPEECH OF

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, July 22, 1997

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of Concurrent Resolution 81, calling for a just and peaceful resolution of the situation in Cyprus. The division of Cyprus and the emotional and physical suffering it has brought to island inhabitants and their families has gone on far too long. It is time to renew efforts to bring peace to this troubled part of the world.

Mr. Speaker, I see three positive signs on the horizon which, if supported and nourished, offer hope for a settlement of the conflict in Cyprus.

First, the United Nations is hosting a new set of talks between Cypriot President Clerides and Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash. Although similar negotiations have been brokered with little effect in the past, open channels of communication are indispensable—they cannot be discounted.

Second, Cyprus is preparing to enter into negotiations with the European Union in 1998 to gain membership into the EU. The prospect of EU membership offers increased prosperity for all, and may provide an added incentive for all sides to resolve their differences.

Third, there is again high-level United States engagement in the issue, with the appointment by the President of Richard Holbrooke as Special Presidential Envoy to Cyprus.

Mr. Speaker, I believe these three developments provide renewed momentum toward resolving this difficult problem, with its potential for increasing tensions in an area of strategic interest to the United States.

The expressed support of the U.S. Congress for a peaceful resolution is important and I join in support of House Concurrent Resolution 81.

INCREASED HIGHWAY FATALITIES DUE TO FASTER SPEED LIMITS

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 1997

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, just last week, in the July 14, 1997, issue of USA Today an article entitled "Fewer Dying Despite Faster Speed Limits" reported that a decrease in the number of highway fatalities is a direct result of increased speed limits. On the contrary, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration claims that highway fatalities are in fact up overall from 1996, leading us once again to the conclusion that speed and safety don't mix.

In 1987, when we allowed States to raise rural interstate highway speed limits to 65 mph, a 15–20 percent increase in deaths on interstate highways resulted, amounting to an increase of 500 deaths per year. Now, after the States were allowed, at their option, to raise speed limits in 1995, we see once again

the result of high speed limits. Every time we raise the speed limit more people die. It's as simple as that.

In 1995, when Congress considered legislation to repeal the national speed limit, I led the charge to maintain what was then current law set in place in 1974. I did so because, as a result of that law, the very first year after its enactment highway deaths dropped by over 9,000.

At the time, I said that the repeal of the national minimum speed limit would turn our highways into killing fields. Some proponents of the National Highway System Designation Act of 1995, however, used States' rights as an issue in passing this bill. They claimed we should let the States decide what their own speed limits should be. I'll say now what I said then, this is not a States' rights issue, it is a human rights issue. People are dying out there and we have the opportunity to do something about it. After all, the Federal Government financed 90 percent of the cost to construct the Interstate Highway System. The Federal Government, therefore, has a vested interest in the protection and safety of those roads.

Yet, the National Highway System Designation Act of 1995 gave the States the power to set their own speed limits. It repealed the Federal standard. In many cases States raised their speed limits. Many by 10 mph, others by 15–20 miles per hour, and in extreme cases such as Montana, simply abolished them during daytime hours. The numbers don't lie. These increased speed limits have led to more deaths on America's highways.

For example in California on roads where speed limits were increased to 70 or 75 miles per hour there has been a 12 percent increase in fatalities. On roads where there was a increase to 65 miles per hour there has been a 22 percent increase in fatalities. However, sometimes the numbers can be misleading. In California they have a reduction in traffic fatalities. However, on roads where the speed limit was increased, they saw an alarming rise in the number of traffic fatalities. The reason for the overall reduction in deaths is the result of a 8 percent reduction in death on roads that remained at the 55 miles per hour speed limit.

These are the facts. On roads where the speed limit is increased, more people die. On roads where the speed limit remained 55 miles per hour, there was a reduction in traffic fatalities. It's simple, it's there in black and white. Let's make our roads safe again and demand a uniform national speed limit of 55 miles per hour.

IN HONOR OF LOUIS L. FERFOLIA

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 23, 1997

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of Louis L. Ferfolia, an accomplished businessman, as well as a devoted husband. This year marked the 70th anniversary of the founding of his Ferfolia funeral homes and of the marriage to his wife.

Mr. Ferfolia was born in Cleveland, where he experimented in many fields of business before entering the funeral home business. After graduating from the College of Mortuary